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	FBIE-00	VC-00	H-01	TEDE-00	INR-00	IO-00	L-00
	VCE-00	AC-01	DCP-01	NSAE-00	OIC-02	OMB-01	OPIC-01
	PA-00	PM-00	PRS-00	ACE-00	P-00	SP-00	STR-00
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FM AMEMBASSY HARARE
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 8392
INFO NSC WASHDC PRIORITY
SOUTHERN AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY
AMEMBASSY NAIROBI

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 HARARE 000975

SIPDIS

NSC FOR SENIOR AFRICA DIRECTOR JENDAYI FRAZER

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PASS USTR FOR ROSA WHITAKER

E.O. 12958: DECL: 03/12/11
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PINR](#) [KDEM](#) [ZI](#)
SUBJECT: ZIMBABWE PRESIDENTIAL SUCCESSION RACE DOWN TO
TWO RUNNERS

REFS: A) HARARE 969, B) HARARE 871, C) HARARE 847

CLASSIFIED BY CHARGE D'AFFAIRES EARL IRVING FOR REASONS:
1.5 (B) AND (D).

[11.](#) (C) SUMMARY: ZIMBABWE'S PRESIDENTIAL SUCCESSION RACE HAS NARROWED TO TWO PEOPLE SHOULD PRESIDENT ROBERT MUGABE DECIDE NOT TO RUN FOR REELECTION IN THE EARLY 2002 RACE. SPEAKER OF PARLIAMENT EMMERSON MNANGAGWA IS IN THE STRONGEST POSITION TO TAKE OVER THE COUNTRY'S REINS, WITH HIS VERY CLOSE TIES TO THE PRESIDENT AND THE PARTY'S "OLD GUARD," ACCORDING TO OUR CONTACTS. FINANCE MINISTER SIMBA MAKONI IS IN SECOND PLACE IN THE SUCCESSION RACE, AND HIS LACK OF STRONG TIES TO ANY ONE FACTION AND HIS APPEAL AMONG ZIMBABWE'S SMALL BUT INFLUENTIAL MIDDLE CLASS, MAKE HIM A STRONG CONTENDER AMONG THE PARTY'S MODERATES. THE PRESIDENTIAL HOPES OF OTHER AMBITIOUS LEADERS, SUCH AS LOCAL GOVERNMENT MINISTER IGNATIUS CHOMBO AND HOME AFFAIRS MINISTER JOHN NKOMO, ARE FADING FAST AS THEY FAIL TO MAKE THEMSELVES KNOWN TO THE ELECTORATE. END SUMMARY.

[12.](#) (C) POLOFF SPOKE TO MASIPULA SITHOLE, A POLITICAL SCIENCE PROFESSOR AT THE UNIVERSITY OF ZIMBABWE,
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INFLUENTIAL COLUMNIST, AND DIRECTOR OF THE INSTITUTE OF PUBLIC OPINION, ON MARCH 6 ABOUT THE SUCCESSION STRUGGLE IN ZANU-PF. POLOFF ALSO INTERVIEWED IDEN WETHERELL, EDITOR OF "THE ZIMBABWE INDEPENDENT" NEWSPAPER ON MARCH 7 ON THE SAME SUBJECT. ALTHOUGH IT APPEARS PRESIDENT MUGABE HAS EVERY INTENTION OF RUNNING AGAIN IN EARLY 2002, THERE IS A POSSIBILITY THAT HE MAY ANOINT A SUCCESSOR IF HE DETERMINES BY YEAR'S END THAT HE CANNOT WIN REELECTION, RATHER THAN RISK AN OPPOSITION VICTORY. MORE LIKELY, HOWEVER, MUGABE WILL RESIGN MIDWAY THROUGH A FINAL TERM AND HAND THE REINS TO A SUCCESSOR AT THAT POINT. THIS MESSAGE EXAMINES WHO HAS THE BEST CHANCE AT THIS POINT OF BECOMING THAT SUCCESSOR.

MNANGAGWA LEADS THE PACK

[13.](#) (C) SPEAKER OF PARLIAMENT EMMERSON MNANGAGWA IS IN THE STRONGEST POSITION TO SUCCEED PRESIDENT MUGABE, THE CONTACTS WE TALKED TO AGREED. SITHOLE CALLED MNANGAGWA "THE PRINCE'S FAVORITE" BECAUSE OF THEIR LONG-TIME AND VERY CLOSE TIES. (SITHOLE CALLS MUGABE "THE PRINCE")

BECAUSE THE PRESIDENT READS THE MACHIAVELLI WORK OVER AND OVER AGAIN, THE PROFESSOR MUSED.) SITHOLE RECOUNTED MNANGAGWA'S DAYS WORKING WITH MUGABE DURING THE LIBERATION STRUGGLE WHILE IN EXILE IN THE LATE 1970S. AS MUGABE'S CHIEF OF SECURITY, MNANGAGWA PROVIDED INFORMATION TO MUGABE ON THE ACTIVITIES OF HIS RIVALS IN THE LIBERATION MOVEMENT. MNANGAGWA'S REPORTS LED MUGABE TO IMPRISON A NUMBER OF MOVEMENT POLITICIANS, INCLUDING KUMBIRAI KANGAI (FORMER AGRICULTURE MINISTER) AND RUGARE

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GUMBO (CURRENT DEPUTY MINISTER OF HOME AFFAIRS), EVEN BEFORE INDEPENDENCE, SITHOLE SAID. MNANGAGWA LIKELY HAD A HAND IN THE DECEMBER 1979 DEATH OF JOSIAH TONGOGARA, MUGABE'S PRINCIPAL RIVAL FOR CONTROL OF THE ZANU MOVEMENT AT THE TIME, THE PROFESSOR STATED. AFTER INDEPENDENCE IN 1980, MNANGAGWA, AS MUGABE'S NEW MINISTER FOR NATIONAL SECURITY AND OVERSEER OF THE CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE ORGANIZATION, PUT SPIES ON VIRTUALLY EVERY PROMINENT FIGURE IN ZANU, WHICH STRENGTHENED MUGABE'S HOLD ON THE PARTY IMMEASURABLY.

14. (C) MNANGAGWA'S POSITION AS MUGABE'S "FAVORITE" COULD ACTUALLY TURN OUT TO BE LIABILITY FOR MNANGAGWA, SITHOLE ARGUED. MUGABE IS NOT WELL LIKED IN THE PARTY, AND MNANGAGWA'S VERY CLOSE ASSOCIATION WITH HIM DOES NOT IMPROVE MNANGAGWA'S ALREADY VERY LOW POPULARITY RATINGS. IF THE PARTY HAD HAD ANYTHING TO SAY ABOUT MNANGAGWA'S ELECTION AS SPEAKER OF PARLIAMENT IN AUGUST 2000, THE SPEAKER WOULD NEVER HAVE BEEN PUT FORWARD AS A CANDIDATE, THE COLUMNIST SURMISED. HE IS SPEAKER BECAUSE MUGABE WANTED IT THAT WAY. ZANU-PF WOULD NEVER VOLUNTARILY NOMINATE MNANGAGWA AS ITS CANDIDATE FOR PRESIDENT, EITHER; IT WOULD ONLY DO SO IF MUGABE IMPOSED HIS CANDIDACY, SITHOLE CONCLUDED.

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	FBIE-00	VC-00	H-01	TEDE-00	INR-00	IO-00	L-00
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TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 8393
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 02 OF 03 HARARE 000975

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15. (C) "THE INDEPENDENT" EDITOR WETHERELL DESCRIBED MNANGAGWA AS A "NIMBLE OPERATOR," AND "ONE OF THE MOST INTELLIGENT MEN IN GOVERNMENT," WHICH MAKES HIM ALL THE MORE DANGEROUS. THE SPEAKER ALSO HAS A VERY ASTUTE UNDERSTANDING OF FOREIGN GOVERNMENTS' AGENDAS AND GLOBAL ISSUES, AND KNOWS ALL THE RIGHT THINGS TO SAY ON HUMAN RIGHTS AND OTHER WESTERN CONCERNS. HE IS GOOD AT "PLAYING TO ALL GALLERIES," THE EDITOR REMARKED. NONETHELESS, MNANGAGWA IS NOT WELL-LIKED IN THE PARTY, OR THE COUNTRY AS A WHOLE -- HIS FAILED BID TO BECOME ZANU-PF NATIONAL CHAIRMAN IN DECEMBER 1999 AND HIS RESOUNDING LOSS OF HIS KWEKWE PARLIAMENTARY SEAT LAST JUNE ARE AMPLE EVIDENCE OF THIS, WETHERELL STATED.

MNANGAGWA WOULD BE MORE OF A LIABILITY TO ZANU-PF THAN MUGABE SHOULD THE SPEAKER BECOME THE PARTY'S PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE, WETHERELL OPINED.

16. (C) IT IS WORTH NOTING THAT THE MARCH 2-8 EDITION OF THE GOVERNMENT-INFLUENCED "THE MIRROR" REPORTED THAT THE PROVINCIAL RESTRUCTURING EFFORT CURRENTLY UNDERWAY IN ZANU-PF (REF B) IS DESIGNED TO PUT IN LOCAL LEADERS WHO CAN EFFECTIVELY "MARKET" MNANGAGWA AS A PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE TO THE MASSES. THE ARTICLE ALSO REPORTED THAT THE SYSTEMATIC SIDELINING IN ZANU-PF OF MASVINGO LEADER
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AND MNANGAGWA RIVAL EDDISON ZVOBGO (REF C) IS SUPPOSED TO CLEAR THE WAY FOR A MNANGAGWA PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDACY. ZVOBGO WAS REPORTED TO HAVE LED THE EFFORT TO THWART MNANGAGWA'S BID TO BECOME ZANU-PF'S NATIONAL CHAIRMAN IN DECEMBER 1999, AND IS BEING SIDELINED AS PUNISHMENT AND TO ENSURE HE DOES NOT PRESENT AN OBSTACLE TO MNANGAGWA'S ASCENDANCY. MDC PRESIDENT MORGAN TSVANGIRAI TOLD VISITING DAS MARK BELLAMY ON MARCH 9 (REF A) THAT MNANGAGWA IS THE ONLY ZANU-PF CANDIDATE WITH THE CLOUT TO SUCCEED MUGABE. "THE MDC WOULD WELCOME HIS CANDIDACY," THE OPPOSITION LEADER VOLUNTEERED, REFERRING TO THE SPEAKER'S LOW POPULARITY AND REPUTATION FOR TRUCULENCE.

MAKONI IS IN SECOND PLACE

17. (C) FINANCE MINISTER SIMBA MAKONI WOULD BE ZANU-PF'S PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE IF THE PARTY HAD ANY SAY IN THE MATTER, ACCORDING TO SITHOLE. MAKONI'S STRENGTH IS THAT HE DOES NOT HAVE ANY STRONG TIES TO ANY PARTICULAR FACTION IN ZANU-PF, WHICH MAKES HIM AN IDEAL CANDIDATE ON WHOM EVERYONE CAN AGREE, THE PROFESSOR OPINED. IN ADDITION, MAKONI APPEALS TO ZIMBABWE'S RELATIVELY SMALL BUT INFLUENTIAL MIDDLE CLASS THAT DOMINATES THE URBAN AREAS. SITHOLE BELIEVES THAT MAKONI IS MAKING AN IMPRESSION ON THE ZANU-PF MEMBERSHIP BECAUSE HE IS PERSUASIVE, KNOWLEDGEABLE ON WIDE VARIETY OF ISSUES, AND LOOKS LIKE SOMEONE WHO COULD HAVE A VISION FOR THE COUNTRY. (NOTE: WHEN PRESSED, SITHOLE DID NOT KNOW WHAT THAT VISION MIGHT BE, HOWEVER. END NOTE.) MAKONI IS
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ALSO SMART ENOUGH TO CULTIVATE A CORDIAL RELATIONSHIP WITH THE MDC. HE COULD BE A MINISTER OF FINANCE UNDER AN MDC-LED GOVERNMENT OF NATIONAL UNITY, SHOULD THE MDC WIN THE PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION, SITHOLE PREDICTED.

18. (C) WETHERELL WAS LESS OPTIMISTIC ABOUT MAKONI'S PROSPECTS. HE STATED THAT MNANGAGWA WOULD HAVE TO BE COMPLETELY OUT OF THE PICTURE IN ORDER FOR MAKONI TO HAVE ANY SHOT AT THE PRESIDENCY. MAKONI HAS NO POWER BASE OF HIS OWN, AND IS A PRODUCT OF THE ZANU-PF SYSTEM OF "BARONIAL FIEFDOMS," WETHERELL COMMENTED. MAKONI TRIED TO ESTABLISH HIS OWN BASE IN MANICALAND IN RECENT YEARS, BUT FAILED. DESPITE HIS SHORTCOMINGS, MANY IN THE PARTY SEE HIM AS THEIR "GREAT BLACK HOPE." HE HAS AN EXCELLENT GRASP OF ECONOMICS AND POLICYMAKING AND HAS THE ABILITY TO LEAD THE COUNTRY OUT OF ECONOMIC RUIN, THE EDITOR OFFERED. A NUMBER OF ZANU-PF'S EMERGING YOUNG POWER BARONS, SUCH AS CHINHOYI MP PHILLIP CHIYANGWA AND MOUNT DARWIN SOUTH MP TYSON KASUKUWERE, ARE WITHHOLDING THEIR SUPPORT FOR MAKONI BECAUSE THEY ARE AFRAID TO BACK THE WRONG HORSE. THEY ARE MORE INTERESTED IN SELF-ENRICHMENT, ANYWAY, AND MAKONI'S REFORM POLICIES COULD JEOPARDIZE THEIR SUBSTANTIAL BUSINESS LINKAGES TO ZANU-PF, ACCORDING TO WETHERELL. IN REF A MEETING, MORGAN TSVANGIRAI DISMISSED MAKONI'S

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CANDIDACY, NOTING, "HE COULD NEVER CONTROL THE ZANU-PF HARDLINERS." MASVINGO ZANU-PF "SUPREMO" ZVOBGO, ON THE OTHER HAND, IMPLIED HIS SUPPORT OF MAKONI TO US, SAYING THAT MANY WOULD THROW THEIR WEIGHT BEHIND HIM BECAUSE OF HIS POPULAR APPEAL.

OTHER CONTENDERS FALLING FAR BEHIND

19. (C) THE PRESIDENTIAL PROSPECTS OF MINISTER OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT, PUBLIC WORKS AND NATIONAL HOUSING IGNATIUS CHOMBO ARE FADING FAST, BOTH SITHOLE AND WETHERELL AGREED. ALTHOUGH SOME THINK HE IS PRESIDENTIAL MATERIAL, CHOMBO IS TOO CLOSE TO MUGABE TO HAVE HIS OWN SUPPORT BASE, SITHOLE OPINED. IN FACT, CHOMBO IS A DISTANT COUSIN OF MUGABE AND CAME FROM THE SAME VILLAGE IN ZVIMBA DISTRICT AS THE PRESIDENT, THE PROFESSOR ASSERTED. WETHERELL DESCRIBED CHOMBO AS THE PRESIDENT'S "BLUE-EYED BOY," BUT NOT AS PARTICULARLY BRIGHT OR POLITICALLY ASTUTE. ZANU-PF NATIONAL CHAIRMAN JOHN NKOMO, WHO COMPLETELY LACKS ANY CHARISMA, LOST HIS CHANCE FOR THE PRESIDENCY WHEN HE FAILED TO WIN A PARLIAMENTARY SEAT LAST JUNE, THE EDITOR REMARKED. FURTHERMORE, NKOMO HAS FAILED TO MAKE A NAME FOR HIMSELF
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AMONG ZIMBABWEAN VOTERS, WETHERELL CONCLUDED.

110. (C) BOTH INTERLOCUTORS AGREED THAT MINISTER FOR INFORMATION AND PUBLICITY JONATHAN MOYO IS DESPISED IN ZANU-PF AND WILL NEVER BE ANYTHING MORE THAN "PRESIDENT MUGABE'S MAN." IT IS CONCEIVABLE THAT MOYO COULD BECOME A PRIME MINISTER UNDER A FINAL MUGABE TERM AND AMENDED CONSTITUTION, BUT AS SOON AS MUGABE GOES, SO WILL MOYO, WETHERELL BELIEVES. MOYO IS ONE OF THE MOST HATED FIGURES IN THE COUNTRY RIGHT NOW AND NO ONE OTHER THAN MUGABE WILL BACK HIM.

COMMENT

111. (C) IT APPEARS THAT THE PRESIDENTIAL SUCCESSION RACE IS NARROWING TO TWO PEOPLE: MNANGAGWA AND MAKONI. SHOULD SOMETHING HAPPEN TO MUGABE TOMORROW, MNANGAGWA IS BEST POSITIONED TO STEP IN, PICK UP THE PIECES, AND CONSOLIDATE POWER. DESPITE THE COMMON REFRAIN THAT MNANGAGWA IS WIDELY HATED IN THE PARTY FOR HIS RUTHLESSNESS, ONE CAN ALSO SEE IN HIM A PRAGMATIC AND SKILLFUL POLITICIAN THAT COULD HOLD A GOVERNMENT TOGETHER AND SOOTH AN INTERNATIONAL AUDIENCE. IT IS FAR FROM CLEAR, HOWEVER, WHETHER HE WOULD MAKE THE HARD CHOICES TO SHORE UP ZIMBABWE'S CRUMBLING DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS AND COLLAPSING ECONOMY. MNANGAGWA WOULD REPRESENT A CONTINUATION OF THE MUGABE ERA, AND POSSIBLY A VERY LONG CONTINUATION AT THAT, SHOULD MUGABE HOLD THE MDC AT BAY IN THE ELECTION AND PASS THE BATON TO MNANGAGWA.

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112. (C) COMMENT CONTINUED: MAKONI, ON THE OTHER HAND, WOULD LIKELY TRY TO IMPLEMENT THE DEMOCRATIC AND ECONOMIC REFORMS NEEDED TO TURN ZIMBABWE AROUND, BUT HE MAY NOT HAVE THE POLITICAL SKILLS TO HOLD A FRACTIOUS GOVERNMENT TOGETHER OR FEND OFF CHALLENGES FROM THE OPPOSITION. MAKONI, YOUNGER THAN MUGABE AND MNANGAGWA, WOULD REPRESENT A CLEAN BREAK FROM THE OLD ZANU-PF, AND COULD PROBABLY GARNER REAL PUBLIC SUPPORT. HIS TENURE COULD BE SHORTENED, HOWEVER, BY MORE WILY AND RUTHLESS OPERATIVES IN ZANU-PF. ZIMBABWEAN VOTERS COULD YET HAVE

THE FINAL SAY, HOWEVER, AND CAST OUT THE WHOLE ZANU-PF
LOT AND GIVE THE MDC A CHANCE AT GOVERNING. END
COMMENT.

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